

Public Meeting Policy:

Conducting Public meetings

Meeting Agenda

1. Announce topic of meeting
2. Address conflicts of interest
3. State the agenda for the meeting which includes:
 - (a) Topics for discussion
 - (b) Periods of commissioner discussion
 - (c) Designated time and length of public comment period
 - (d) Define point at which a decision may be made or voted upon
4. Sponsoring commissioner, chair, or staff introduces topic and commences commissioner discussion which should define any proposed actions or options for actions
5. Any staff reports should be addressed and chair will acknowledge receipt of any written comment
6. Public comment – There will be only one public comment period which will include the central topic and all related subtopics
7. Chair will then ask if there are any motions for discussion
8. After commissioner discussion chair will call the question and a vote will be taken
9. Items for discussion not on the agenda (20-30 second public comments, questions, or suggestions specifically pertaining to items other than that of the meeting which was just concluded) No decision may be made by the board on any of these items which are presented under this agenda item

10. Adjourn

Rules for public comment and commissioner discussion. The Ravalli County BCC has not officially adopted Robert Rules but adopts the following patterned after Roberts Rules:

(1) Any citizen will be allowed only one comment on each item. A second round of comment will not be permitted on the same item. The citizen may ask questions of the board as a whole during their comment but at no time will the Chair allow an individual debate between citizen and board member or “follow-up” question from citizen. Rarely and infrequently, a member of the board may be allowed, at the discretion of the chair, a direct response to a public comment.

(2) Citizens will address the Chair or the Board as a whole and are directed not to address any individual board member. Note: A statement such as, “Commissioner Johnson stated that...” is a reference or a quoted statement and is permitted. A statement such as, “Commissioner Johnson, I want to know...” will be ruled out of order.

(3) Citizens will address the BCC only. All comments are to be directed toward (meaning not only context, but physically addressing the board which includes facing the board) the BCC. When staff or resource people are present for discussion, all questions or comments will be directed to the BCC. During commissioner discussion, not public comment, the Chair or any other commissioner may ask the staff member or resource person a question or ask them to directly address the question posed during public comment. To do otherwise unfairly consumes time of others who wish to comment.

(4) At the meeting’s outset, a time limit will be set for comment. This time is virtually always two or three minutes. In meetings where a large number of people have expressed interest in making comment, a timer will be set. At the time limit a buzzer will sound and the chair may allow the speaker to finish his/her sentence. The Chair is not authorized to allow more than 10 or 15 seconds over the time limit. During commissioner discussion a member of the board may ask a question of a member of the public for further clarification. If the member of the public wishes to respond, that response will be no more than two minutes. In this case, public comment is not reopened. A member of the board is simply gathering more information for his/her consideration.